

ECEY6004 Inclusive Leadership: Working together to support families

This assignment discusses the role of inclusive leadership, how practitioners can become inclusive leaders by working in partnership with children, families, outside agencies and the community to create an inclusive learning environment. (Rusch,1998) states that leadership does not reside in a position or a person, but in equitable, caring and fluid relationships among various individuals. Inclusive leadership in schools creates an environment that meets a child's needs so that they can feel valued and supported. (Blase & Blase, 1997) argue that schools should encourage and embrace teacher leadership, to improve the ways that schools work.

Being an inclusive leader means to be a leader that actively seeks out to find solutions that will include and value diverse perspectives and backgrounds. Advocating for the team they work with to achieve the best possible outcome for the children and families they serve.

Scenario

- There has been a Reception school place offered to a four-year-old boy that will be joining your setting, the spring term has just started; the only information that school has been given about the family is that they have recently moved to the UK, English is not their first language and that the native language the family speak is French, the parents can only speak broken English. The school needs to set up a home visit, for there to be effective communication, the school's Family Support Manager and a Teaching Assistant who can speak French go out to meet the family in their home. On arrival it is discovered that the family have the bare minimum of furniture, materialistic items and very few personal items.

Working with Families

Children are raised by their families and in their family environment, mostly wherever possible, practitioners should take the initiative to practice inclusive leadership by taking a child centered approach. It is fundamental to have an approach that also brings the family into the focus with the child at the center. (Lewing et al.2018; Rotenberg et al. 2013) states that research and literature around safeguarding emphasises the importance of building trusting relationships. The family in the scenario are living in poverty and without the right interventions they will fall further into a vulnerable state. According to the Social Metrics Commission (2018) there are over 14 million people, including 4.5 million children living in poverty in the UK. Having a child-centered approach is paramount to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of every child. The principles of the (Children Acts, 1989 and 2004) states that the welfare of children are best looked after in their families. Under the (Equality Act, 2010) special provision must be put into place to support children who may not be able to convey their wishes or voices as they would like to. This includes children who are refugees, or are recently claiming asylum, children that do not speak English or English is not their first language. Bronfenbrenner (1977) Ecological systems Theory has been linked to early educational curriculums and practice, according to the theory, teachers and parents should maintain good communication and work well with each other for the benefit of the child (Berk, 2000) The microsystem encompasses the interactions and relationships with their immediate surroundings.

Malow (1954) recognised that for a child to achieve their full potential their basic needs must be met. All children have the right to have access to food and a safe place to live, the (UNCRC,1990,) Article 49) also agrees

that every child has the right to feel safe and develop to their fullest potential.

There are potential barriers that practitioners face when trying to support the family; the family in the scenario are poor and vulnerable. They may feel ashamed and be embarrassed about their situation. Language and not understanding culture would contribute as a barrier, There are solutions that practitioners can take, is to be open-minded and to keep personal opinions to themselves, and to understand there should not be any bias towards the situation the family are in, practitioners should ask the family to share their culture with them. In this scenario the school was fortunate to have a member of staff that could speak the French language. The practitioners would be the position to communicate to the parents to support with getting in touch with early help and the local authority to aid in support, to help the family financially. This is beneficial due the fact both the family and their child can be continually supported.

Working with the children

The child in the scenario is recognised as a bilingual learner or an EAL learner, as the child's home language is French. As an inclusive leader it is important that the practitioner should find out as much information as possible about the child's language, history and culture. The (DfE 2013: NC) states teachers must consider the needs of pupils whose first language is not English to enable the monitoring of progress (DfE, 2024:7) states to ensure equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring every child is included and supported. Also, as an inclusive leader it should be expressed to the family that it is supported and encouraged to not only want the child to only speak English in their home but, to also continue speaking their home language, this will enable the practitioner to help allow the child to explore

their identity in a classroom setting. Papadopoulos (2018) states that it is noted that practitioners can often feel that they lack, the requisite skills and knowledge to respond to refugee children's trauma and complex psychological experiences. By bringing in an inclusive practice, the EYFS (2024) states that 'providers must take reasonable steps to provide opportunity for children to develop and use their home language, in play and in learning by supporting their language development at home as well as in school. Also, (Conteh 2015: 34) states that, languages are formed in the cultural settings in which they are situated, their meanings are shaped by their everyday use. practitioners have the responsibility to ensure that all children are enabled to show their interests, skills and attributes, giving them the opportunity to show us who they are. Only when a child is comfortable will they show self-expression which is crucial for the development of a child's identity, self-confidence and sense of belonging in the world. Stein (1937) Belonging and identity form part of the fundamental aspects of early childhood where children are trying to get a sense of 'who they are, particularly refugee children.

An inclusive leader will reflect on how they can find solutions to encourage and support the child to learn and to understand English, to become a confident and fluent bilingual speaker. (Vygotsky, 1962) and (Burner, 1975) and (Gibbons 2015) all supported and scaffolding language as well as emphasised the importance of learning to work with EAL learners. The types of barriers that a EAL learner can face is that the child may suffer from anxiety, they may enter into what is called a 'silent period' and refuse to speak. Stated by (Siraj-Blatchford and Clarke, 2008:49) (p 214) "a time where they do not talk at all but instead are listening and developing their understanding of the way the new language is used". An inclusive leader can support a child will EAL in a classroom environment by modelling the accurate use of English, to take note of the child's spoken vocabulary to enable the child to build up their vocabulary. The DFE, (2024:17) states providers must also ensure that children have sufficient opportunities to learn and reach a good standard in the English Language.

There are barriers to learning, if staff are not open-minded to how they need to adapt their teaching for the child and, also staff not putting intervention in place can have a negative impact on the child's development. If a child does not receive regular interventions or keep up sessions there could be a delay with their development, If the child is nervous or scared, and they are not able to mix with their peers because they cannot communicate with them, these barriers can contribute to a child refusing to come to school. This could be extremely distressing for the child, and they are in a completely alien environment,

There are solutions the practitioner can use so that the child can be supported in their learning,

There should be plenty of bilingual books placed in the classroom and both French and English words on display. A visual timetable to help them recognise the structure of the day, have the use of widget cards that display emotions and, also have widget cards that display images with both languages giving the child the opportunity to express what they need and how they are feeling, enabling the child to communicate in ways they know they are being listened to will give them confidence in the setting. The child will communicate more effectively and may pick up the English language quicker, with newfound confidence and encouragement. The staff in the setting and around the school can introduce the French language to the cohorts in each setting, but especially in the early years as the child will learn to express themselves in both languages, this will encourage conversation with the children. The children in the setting would enjoy learning new language, practitioners can promote the use of both languages to the cohort, giving opportunity for the other children to experience a new language. In the case of the scenario the school has a member of staff that can speak French and can support the child with interventions individually and as a whole class. A soft introduction to the setting can be done to gradually build up confidence, if the child finds it too upsetting to come into school to begin with, gradually building up the hours throughout the week.

Working with the other professionals to support children and family

When working with other professionals, practitioners should be able to demonstrate inclusive leadership in sharing important information as early as possible, in order to identify, assess and respond to any concerns or risks about the safety and wellbeing of children in their setting. (The Data Protection Act, 2018) and the (UK GDPR) state, their support for sharing relevant information for the welfare of children. The adults in the scenario can only speak broken English so the practitioners and professionals working with the family must be clear and transparent when communicating with the parents about what information they need to share and what they as a school, are trying to put into place to support the family. The family in the scenario have only just moved to the United Kingdom and are living in extreme economic poverty. According to the cabinet office Gov.UK (2024) the government has invested heavily in early years and family support, Under the (Equality Act 2010), providing special provisions to support children who have recently claimed asylum. The school can refer the family to the right professionals to enable the family to receive the right support system, school staff should identify the needs of support that the family are in need of receiving. Sharing information must be clear and any information must be reported back to the family . By taking a role in inclusive leadership the practitioners can share their concerns with the senior leadership to have the family referred to Early help to find solutions to prevent the family becoming to harm from living in such a poor condition. As not only child, but also parents can all suffer from ill health or poor mental health due to the scenario they are in, this could put the child at a disadvantage before they start school. The family can be referred to Early help provision for intervention, this service can support the parents as well as the child, it works with a range professionals, such as mental health nurses, health visitors, therapists, psychologist, social workers and family support workers. The service would

support the family with their financial worries and living conditions. The early help plan the family are given, will be shared with any professional working with the family, the plan is reviewed for the Team Around the Child (TAC) and Team Around the Family (TAF) these reviews will bring professionals together and regular reviews will help the family's needs to be met then next step can be put in place. The family can also be referred to the local authority and the citizen'

However, if there are barriers, such as the family refusing help, refusing to give personal details or taken offensive to the intrusion and refuse support, this can lead to the family being referred to social services or CAMHS.

School and the Community

Inclusive leadership in schools focuses on creating an environment for all students, regardless of the background or abilities. Giving equal opportunities to succeed, students should feel valued and supported. SLT leadership in schools should enable and create conditions for teachers to lead (Johnson et al; 2014). Engaging teachers as partners in diagnosing the needs for schools, the child and devising strategies to address them.

Schools can work within the community around them to encourage good parent and school partnership, building the foundations for supporting family engagement. Parents are their children's first educators, sharing their knowledge with their children through engagement in their everyday activities, also continuing to support their child's learning once that are in a school setting. (Goodall & Montgomery, 2014), suggests that at this point it is essential and key for parents to continue their child's education. Also stating that therefore, developing parent-practitioner partnership is crucial in facilitating and encouraging this. Children are not just in an environment that only involve family and school, the environments build and expand when they join sports clubs, dance groups and extra-curricular activities, they

experience other professionals in the community, their peers and friendship groups, a child can belong to more than one community each with their own values and beliefs. From these communities' children will learn so much, they will pick up things that they can teach others also passing on qualities and values they have learnt, these values can have a positive impact on a child's development, helping to shape and mold them. According to Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Microsystem Theory suggests, that the child's development occurs within an ecological system that contains multiple environments that shape a child as they grow into an adult. The different relationships that a child experiences in these environments and the influences that the adults and peers have on the child. Children learn from the culture and community in which they grow up in, teaching the child about the world around them. For schools to become inclusive leaders they must create an inclusive environment, by bringing happiness, a feeling of safety and to become a part of the community. they must open their doors to the community inviting them in; school can hold events such as summer and winter fairs, activity clubs. They can hold workshops for the parents and children or for parents alone. They can bring in services to help educate the community, such as offering parent classes or help them with their own education. Schools can hold coffee mornings, offering the parents and guardians a chance to meet and create friendships. They can work with the community to raise funds for charity, for low-income families in the community they can hold food banks and donate uniform to parents who cannot afford to pay full price. The schools can educate the community about how we can look after the environment we also live in and can encourage children to come up with ideas of how they can help people. School can in turn learn about the people and the different cultures that are around them, creating a positive and supportive environment for all pupils to reinforced shared language, activity, routine and strategies embedding culture proactively. Creating a network and a team around the child for a better outcome, to avoid potential barriers such as bias from both professionals and individuals in the community.

Policy and professional guidance

The EYFS Framework

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is a Framework to sets out standards for learning and development, the EYFS (2024) policy states that in the Early Years Children are valued as unique individuals, who learn and thrive through a holistic approach. This includes in the areas of physical, intellectual, emotional, social and cultural experiences. The Ethos of the setting is to promote an environment that encourages the holistic development of the unique child, valuing, understanding, and appreciating other cultures, beliefs. And values. For practitioners that are inclusive leaders, it is important that they self-reflect and adapt their teaching for the needs of children, the children can be effectively supported to meet the ELG's (early learning goals). However, some critics can argue that certain aspects of the framework can reflect an unconscious bias, these biases can be from educators' personal experiences, cultural backgrounds and societal influences. Being bias could affect how some educators perceive and assess children from different cultural, linguistic, or socio-economic backgrounds. This may lead into unfair treatment or misinterpretation of children's behaviour and abilities.

The EYFS framework policy from this setting, states that all children have equal opportunities regardless of gender, race, culture or ability, having equal access to the curriculum and resources. The policy states that all practitioners have the responsibility to maintain positive attitudes to diversity and difference, ensuring that inclusive practice is delivered. The child in the scenario will faces challenges due to being a non-English speaker, however as the setting already had a member of staff that could speak his native language it gave opportunity for the child to develop in their learning and for there to be effective communication between school and family.

Equality and diversity (Equal Opportunities) policy

The Equality and diversity policy, based for the setting from the scenario states that they will support all pupils that have English as additional language, however it does not state exactly how the setting would do that or how they would achieve to meet the needs of a child with EAL. It also states that assessment is free from cultural, social and gender bias but how can it not show bias when the setting is assessing children in all of the same way. The scenario should identify the need for an EAL policy, that could state what it would like to see achieved to ensure EAL learners are to receive the additional support and provision for their individual needs to ensure that ELG's are being met. the policy should also reflect on how practitioners will reflect on and adapt their teaching to meet these needs.

The Equality Act (2010): advice for schools gives guidance on how they can fulfil their duties under the act but does not give guidance specifically on EAL learners. The English Proficiency of pupils with English as an additional language (2022) shows, the percentage of pupils that have EAL are likely to score in proficiency levels but does not give school guidance towards the provision that could be put in place.

This where inclusive leadership come into play as practitioners need to reflect on the learning of an EAL child, enabling them to adapt learning to the needs and allowing them to get to know the child's personality by putting in place intervention.

Safeguarding policy

Safeguarding policy 2023-2024

The school safeguarding policy applies to all staff at the school, giving guidance on keeping children safe, is a child-focused approach to safeguarding and is taken from a variety of legislative provisions and statutory guidance, taking guidance from,

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 (KCSIE)
- Working together to Safeguard Children 2018 (WTSC)
- Ofsted: Education Inspection Framework'2023
- Framework for the Assessment of children in need and their families 2000
- Solihull MBC Safeguarding Children Procedures
- Early Years and Foundation Stage Framework 2023 (EYFS)
- Digital and technology standards for schools and colleagues (2023)

The setting will go above and beyond for the safeguarding of a child, ensuring every child has lunch everyday by checking lunch choices and adding children into them. They have an open door and parent, and school partnership is strong, supporting parents in difficult times, raising money, buying food and essential items for low-income families that are in need of support. The family support manager at the setting supports children and their families, finding solutions and referring them to the right services.

The UK government poverty policy (2024) states that in 2021/22, 1.6 million children were in both a relative low income and material deprivation. The multi-agency response to children and families who need help (2023) Research and analysis states that in their review the services for early help

were more effective with interventions for children and their family when MASH was present in the team around the child.

Child poverty needs action, according to the child Poverty Act (2010) the target to eradicate child poverty by 2020 was missed, the root causes of poverty are remaining unchecked, the procedures that was put in place helped to contribute to poverty. As in the scenario the child and their family are living in extreme poverty, where they are reduced to sleeping on mattresses on the floor, living in poverty means that a child can go without their basic needs being met, having a detrimental effect on their development. Child poverty needs action, according to the child Poverty Act (2010) the target to eradicate child poverty by 2020 was missed, the root causes of poverty are remaining unchecked, the procedures that was put in place helped to contribute to poverty.

It was reported that MASH across the partnership could share information effectively. Although there were barriers as, there were partners that could not be fully engaged as they worked more in public areas and were unable to hold sensitive meetings, there were also pressures that would mean workers were only getting advice and talking through cases when they were on duty in the office. It was found that a wide range of professionals working across the partnerships for children and families were unclear where the thresholds were, it was reported that there were school staff that did not understand a social care assessment referral meant a step up to statutory social care work, the outcomes resulted in no further action. If children are believed to be overseen by professionals when they are not this creates a risk, that they will be completely missed or overlooked. If effective assessments do not take place, then intervention will have an impact if they do not place early enough for some children. Effective early help for children and their families can reduce the number of cases needing social work intervention.

It is vital for professionals working together have clear communication and information-sharing, having good data systems in place, clear processes, staff that are a confident and skilled workforce all give the foundations for good information sharing. This is important, children can receive the help they need faster, effective communication and recording information is key to safeguarding children preventing and safeguarding them from potential risk and harm.

Policies aim to achieve that all children have equal opportunities and support regardless. It is important that practitioners are receiving up to date training, that they read and understand the language that is in the policies, to keep themselves up to date with any changes.

Reference list

Baginsky, Mary, et al. "Protecting and Safeguarding Children in Schools." *Policy Press EBooks*, vol. 1st ed, no. 1st edition, 27 July 2022, <https://doi.org/10.56687/9781447358299>. Accessed 20 Dec. 2023.

Department for Education. "English Proficiency: Pupils with English as Additional Language." *GOV.UK*, 27 Feb. 2020, www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-proficiency-pupils-with-english-as-additional-language.

Dobson, Jim, and Alexandra Melrose. *Working with Children, Families and Young People*. Routledge, 20 July 2020.

Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework for Group and School-Based Providers Setting the Standards for Learning, Development and Care for Children from Birth to Five.

"Educational Outcomes of Children with English as an Additional Language - the Bell Foundation." *The Bell Foundation*, 10 Nov. 2023, www.bell-foundation.org.uk/our-work/our-research/eal-research/educational-outcomes-of-children-with-english-as-an-additional-language/?form=MG0AV3. Accessed 25 Jan. 2025.

Haves, Emily. "Poverty in the UK: Government Policy." *House of Lords Library*, 12 Feb. 2024, lordslibrary.parliament.uk/poverty-in-the-uk-government-policy/.

Ioanna Palailogou. *The Early Years Foundation Stage : Theory and Practice*. Edited by Ioanna Palailogou, 5th ed., London, Sage Publications Ltd, 2021.

Knowles, Gianna. *Supporting Inclusive Practice and Ensuring Opportunity Is Equal for All*. Routledge, 6 July 2017.

Legislation.Gov.UK. "Equality Act 2010." *Legislation.gov.uk*, Gov.uk, 1 Oct. 2010, www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents.

Lynch, Timothy, and Springerlink (Online Service). *Physical Education and Wellbeing : Global and Holistic Approaches to Child Health*. Cham, Springer International Publishing, 2019.

Office, Cabinet. "Tackling Child Poverty: Developing Our Strategy (HTML)." GOV.UK, 23 Oct. 2024, www.gov.uk/government/publications/tackling-child-poverty-developing-our-strategy/tackling-child-poverty-developing-our-strategy-html.

Oxley, Emily, and Cécile de Cat. "A Systematic Review of Language and Literacy Interventions in Children and Adolescents with English as an Additional Language (EAL)." *The Language Learning Journal*, vol. 49, no. 3, 11 Apr. 2021, pp. 1–23, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09571736.2019.1597146>.

"Policies." *Our Lady of the Wayside Catholic Primary School*, 2023, www.ol-wayside.solihull.sch.uk/page/?title=Policies&pid=66. Accessed 26 Jan. 2025.

Roberson, Quinetta, and Jamie L. Perry. "Inclusive Leadership in Thought and Action: A Thematic Analysis." *Group & Organization Management*, vol. 47, no. 4, 27 Apr. 2021, pp. 755–778, positiveorgs.bus.umich.edu/wp-content/uploads/Roberson-Perry.pdf, <https://doi.org/10.1177/10596011211013161>.

"The Multi-Agency Response to Children and Families Who Need Help." GOV.UK, July 2023, www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-multi-agency-response-to-children-and-families-who-need-help.

Theoharis, George, and Martin Scanlan. *Leadership for Increasingly Diverse Schools*. 2nd ed., Routledge, 12 Oct. 2020.

to. "Supporting Families - 2021-22 and Beyond." GOV.UK, 26 Mar. 2021, www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-families-2021-to-2022-

[and-beyond/supporting-families-2021-22-and-beyond?form=MG0AV3.](#)

Accessed 24 Jan. 2025.